

In the claims:

Following is a complete set of claims as amended with this Response.

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~network communications system for connecting a plurality of computers in a network, the system comprising:~~
~~multiport circuitry having a plurality of ports to interconnect for interconnecting the a plurality of computers in the a network; and~~
~~a plurality of network communications cable dispensing devices; and each cable dispensing device carrying~~
~~a plurality of network communications cables cable each communications cable~~
~~having a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the communications cable~~
~~having an extremity including a first connector adapted to be coupled to one of the ports of~~
~~the multiport interconnecting circuitry, the second portion of the communications cable being~~
~~extendible from and retractable into the a cable dispensing device and having an extremity~~
~~including a second connector adapted to be coupled to one of the computers.~~

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A system, as defined in claim 1, in which:~~
~~The system of claim 1, wherein~~ the multiport ~~interconnecting~~ circuitry includes a
network switching circuit.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~A system, as defined in claim 1, in which:~~
~~The system of claim 1, wherein~~ the second portion of the communications cable is
retractable into the cable dispensing device under a spring load.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A system, as defined in claim 1, in which:~~
~~The system of claim 1, wherein:~~

the communications cable comprises flat, Category 5 compliant LAN cable including two twisted wire pairs; and

the connector at the extremity of each of the first and second portions of the communications cable comprises an RJ-45 modular plug.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A system, as defined in claim 1, including: The system of claim 1, further comprising~~ a combined power/network cable for connecting the multiport ~~interconnecting~~ circuitry to a local area network and to a source of electrical power.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 1, wherein A system, as defined in claim 1, in which:~~ the multiport ~~interconnecting~~ circuitry includes a connector for coupling the system to a second network communications system in daisy chain fashion.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A system as defined in claim 1, in which: The system of claim 1, wherein~~ the cable dispensing devices are ~~removably~~ ~~removable~~ latched in ~~place~~ ~~place~~ in the system.

8-25 (Cancelled)

26. (Original) A LAN cable dispensing device comprising:
a casing; and
a flat, Category 5 compliant LAN cable having a first portion and a second portion, the first portion of the LAN cable being fixed relative to the casing and having an extremity including a first RJ-45 modular plug and the second portion of the LAN cable being extendible from and retractable under spring load into the casing and having an extremity including a second RJ-45 plug.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~The A cable dispensing device, as defined in of claim 26, wherein in which:~~

the casing includes a surface for receiving the second RJ-45 modular plug when the second portion of the LAN cable is fully retracted; and

the second RJ-45 modular plug includes a shock absorber for engaging ~~said the~~ the casing surface.

28. (Currently Amended) A The cable dispensing device, ~~as defined in~~ of claim 26, ~~in which~~ wherein:

the casing includes a top surface; and

a handle projects from the top surface to facilitate lifting of the dispensing device.

29. (New) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a housing having a base including a side wall and defining a plurality of internal wells, the side wall of the base defining a plurality of client computer ports, each client port communicating with one of the wells; and

a plurality of standard, modular LAN jacks mounted in the housing and corresponding in number to the number of wells, each LAN jack being adapted to receive a standard modular LAN plug; and

wherein the network communication cable dispensing devices are removably mounted within each of the wells;

wherein the first portion of the communications cable is fixed relative to the cable dispensing device;

wherein the first connector comprises a standard modular LAN plug adapted to be received by one of the LAN jacks; and

wherein the second connector comprises a standard modular LAN plug adapted to be received by a corresponding jack on one of the computers

30. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein the multiport circuitry comprises a LAN switch, and the standard modular LAN jacks and plugs are of the RJ-45 type.

31. (New) The system of claim 29 wherein the multiport circuitry further includes a port adapted to be connected to multiport interconnection circuitry of a cascaded network communications system.

32. (New) The system of claim 29, further comprising:
a combined power/LAN cable having a first set of conductors for connecting the multiport circuitry to a source of electrical power and a second set of conductors for carrying network signals between the system and the LAN.

33. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein:
the housing includes a cover having an outer surface;
the multiport circuitry includes light emitters for indicating the status of the computer ports; and
the cover carries light pipes positioned relative to the light emitters so as to transmit light from the light emitters to the outer surface of the cover to provide a visual indication to a user of computer port status.

34. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein each cable dispensing device includes an upper surface carrying a handle facilitating removal of the device from the associated well.

35. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein the second connector includes a resilient pad for absorbing shock resulting from the sudden release of the second portion of the cable from an extended position.

36. (New) The system of claim 1, wherein the communications cables comprise:
a first group of conductors comprising two twisted wire pairs for transmitting data signals, the first connector being adapted to be connected to a data network;
a second group of conductors extending generally parallel with the first group of conductors and comprising two twisted wire pairs for transmitting electrical power, the second group of conductors having a first end and a second end, the first end of the second group of conductors being adapted to be connected to a source of electrical power; and
wherein the second connector comprises an insulative jacket enclosing the first and second groups of conductors.

37 (New) The system of claim 36, wherein the first group of conductors are adapted to transmit Ethernet LAN signals, and wherein the second connector comprises an RJ-45 modular connector terminating the second end of the second group of conductors, the RJ-45 connector having at least eight contact positions, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to a first group of four of the contact positions of the RJ-45 connector and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to a second group of four of the contact positions of the RJ-45 connector.

38. (New) The system of claim 36, further comprising a first EMI/RFI shield enclosing the first group of conductors.

39. (New) The system of claim 38, further comprising a second EMI/RFI shield surrounding the first shield, the second group of conductors being disposed between the first and second shields.

40. (New) The system of claim 37, wherein the RJ-45 modular connector has ten contact positions 1-10, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to contact positions 1-4 and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to contact positions 7-10.

41. (New) The system of claim 40, wherein intermediate contact positions 5 and 6 of the RJ-45 connector are devoid of electrical contacts to provide electrical isolation between the first and second groups of conductors.

42. (New) The system of claim 37, wherein the first connector comprises a second RJ-45 modular connector terminating the second group of conductors at the first end thereof, the second RJ-45 connector having at least eight contact positions, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to a first group of four of the contact positions of the second RJ-45 connector and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to a second group of four of the contact positions of the second RJ-45 connector.

43. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein the second RJ-45 connector has ten contact positions 1-10, the conductors of the first group of conductors being connected to contact positions 1-4 and the conductors of the second group of conductors being connected to contact positions 7-10.

44. (New) The system of claim 43, wherein intermediate contact position 5 and 6 of the second RJ-45 connector are devoid of electrical contacts to provide electrical isolation between the first and second groups of conductors.

45. (New) The system of claim 36, wherein the first group of conductors comprise Category 5 compliant conductors extending generally parallel with the second group of conductors, the system further comprising an insulative jacket enclosing the first and second groups of conductors, the system further comprising:

an electrical power cord; and

a Category 5 compliant cable terminated with a second RJ-45 modular plug for connection to a LAN; and

an enclosure attached to the first and second groups of conductors, the electrical power cord and the Category 5 compliant cable, the enclosure containing conductors interconnecting the Category 5 compliant cable and the first end of the first group of conductors, and a power supply interconnecting the power cord and the first end of the second group of conductors.

Response

In response to the restriction requirement of August 13, 2003, Applicants elect claims 1-7 and 26-28 from Group 1, without traverse. Claims 8-25 have been canceled, without prejudice. Claims 29-45 are new and are based on features originally described in the canceled claims. The new claims are all dependent on claims in Group 1 and are believed to relate only to the Group 1 invention.



Invitation for a Telephone Interview

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (303) 740-1980 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

Request for an Extension of Time

Applicants respectfully petition for an extension of time to respond to the outstanding Office Action pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) should one be necessary. Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 to cover the necessary fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a) for such an extension.

Charge our Deposit Account

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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